

Tablet is better all round for cancer patients

October 8 2007

A drug to treat colon cancer is proving much more convenient than traditional chemotherapy, has fewer side effects - and a study of almost 2,000 patients has shown it is giving them a better chance of surviving the disease.

“Standard chemotherapy can be incredibly disruptive to people’s lives,” said Prof Professor Chris Twelves of the University of Leeds, who led the research. “Patients visit hospital five days a week for the injections and then have three weeks off before returning to hospital for the next course – and the side effects can be unpleasant.”

The oral chemotherapy drug Xeloda (capecitabine) offers fewer side-effects and less time in hospital – and the trial has shown that patients given the drug were at least as likely to be alive and free of their disease as those on standard chemotherapy (the Mayo Clinic regimen).

The research showed that about 71 percent of patients given Xeloda were still alive after five years, compared to 68 percent of patients treated with standard chemotherapy injections.

Prof Twelves’s study followed 1,987 patients who had undergone colon cancer surgery. It found that patients treated with Xeloda spent 85 percent less time with their doctor or at the hospital, and experienced fewer side effects. The new results, showing patients’ five-year survival rates, confirm the effectiveness of the treatment.

“We now have long-term evidence now that clearly supports Xeloda's

superiority over the Mayo Clinic regimen,” said Prof Twelves. “There is now no reason why we should ask colon cancer patients to endure the burdens associated with that older treatment.”

Source: University of Leeds

Citation: Tablet is better all round for cancer patients (2007, October 8) retrieved 24 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2007-10-tablet-cancer-patients.html>

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